

amendments. We had a good debate and a good bill at the end of it.

Senator MURKOWSKI, from the State of Alaska, has also disagreed with me on what should be the best approach on preventive health. We had debates without personal conflict, and we then came up with some good ideas.

I say today, when I listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle—who again have great backgrounds—this is pretty historic.

If you are watching on C-SPAN, you saw history being made. There were 10 of us—and there will be more later today—who actually agreed. We are trying to govern the way we were elected to govern. I am proud with what we are going to do with the reforms that are involved. I am proud of the way we have gone about it, and if we disagree on some matters here and there, that is what debate, intellectual rigor, and civility will be all about.

I will conclude this debate for now. Other women will be coming throughout the day to speak, and we know we will be debating some other important policies as well.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1197.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1197) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Levin-Inhofe) amendment No. 2123, to increase to \$5,000,000,000 the ceiling on the general transfer authority of the Department of Defense.

Reid (for Levin-Inhofe) amendment No. 2124 (to Amendment No. 2123), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2125, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2126 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2125), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2127 (to amendment No. 2126), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 p.m. will be for debate only.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I think everyone is aware that we have a lot of differences on both sides of the aisle. Quite frankly, I just had a meeting with some of the House people. There are some problems right now. I am anxious for Chairman LEVIN to come back, perhaps after our conferences, and I will do the same thing, and hopefully we will be able to do it. I understand there has already been a statement made about the Ayotte amendment on Guantanamo. She is ready to debate, and I think Senator LEVIN has a side-by-side amendment he is ready to debate as well. So that, in my opinion, is about as far as we have come as far as progress. I will withhold any other comments I will make until the chair has made his comments, which will probably be after lunch.

By the way, I ask our Members to continue to file all amendments they have in anticipation that we will, as we have in the past, ultimately come to that conclusion, that we will have amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Senator THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1724 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, we need to be moving forward with the Defense bill. It is very important. I am a member of Armed Services Committee, and we had a good bipartisan vote out of committee to bring the bill to the floor. Chairman LEVIN has been fair to us in committee, so we got a good committee process. But there are some disagreements over a number of issues that the full Senate needs to discuss and vote on. They just should be able to do that.

We are drifting into a process that is absolutely contrary to the history of the Senate—the real concept of the U.S. Senate—where we bring matters up and vote on them. Just because it cleared our committee does not mean the full Senate does not get to vote on some of these differing opinions.

I voted in the committee on a number of amendments that did not pass. We had amendments up in committee that we decided not to vote on, and the phrase was: Well, we will carry that to the floor. In other words, it will be brought up and the whole Senate will vote on it, not just the committee. Maybe in the interim something could be worked out. But if not, it would go to the full Senate, and the full Senate would work its will, would have its debate and vote.

We are going days now with nothing happening, no amendments being voted on. They could have already been voted on. So Senator REID has filled the tree, and that means he has complete control over the process. He has the ability to say we will not have a single amendment. In fact, except for, I think, two, all he has agreed to in this process is to have maybe two amendments up, and that is unacceptable. Senator REID ought to know that. You cannot move the Defense bill of the United States of America, spending \$500 billion, and not have amendments and Senators actually offering suggestions on how to spend that money better and do better for America. What are we here for?

So I am really worried about this. I am afraid that this whole thing could collapse over the failure of amendments to be offered. I look here at a chart. Back, basically, when Republicans were in charge, we had 27 amendments, 25 amendments, 13 amendments actually voted on. The average number was 11.5 amendments voted on.

We already have well over 100 amendments filed. Over half of them, two-thirds of them, will eventually be withdrawn or the managers of the bill will agree to some form of that suggestion with different language and we would move on. But we should have already started on amendments, and we should recognize that a good Defense bill is going to require an open process where we can actually discuss how to fix it and make it better.

In addition, we are facing, under the Budget Control Act and the sequester, some real financial challenges for the Department of Defense that are historic. It is significant. We need to be able to talk about that and work on that and try to figure out a way to strengthen the ability of the Defense Department to function in a rational way and not do unnecessary damage to them while they work to contain spending. That is a critical thing.

So I would say to Senator REID, who has a tough job—there is no doubt about that—Senator REID, you should not attempt this dramatic reduction in the ability of the Senate to actually have amendments to a bill as large and as important as the Defense bill. You are overreaching, Senator REID.

We cannot agree to that. The loyal opposition, the Republican opposition—I say, the bill that came out of committee was bipartisan, overwhelmingly bipartisan, with a big vote in the committee. But there are things that need to be voted on here, and we are not going to agree to a handful of amendments. So if you try to move forward with this bill without allowing at least a legitimate amendment process, you are not going to go forward because we are not going to agree to go forward when you fill the tree and block amendments and have the power to deny amendments of any significant degree on the floor of the Senate.

I am worried about that. I hope my friend, Senator LEVIN, and Senator